

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 3, 6 through 26, 28 through 41, 43, and 45 through 108 are currently pending in the application.

Claims 4, 5, 27, 42, and 44 have been canceled.

Claims 31 through 39 are allowed.

This amendment is in response to the final Office Action of August 4, 2004.

Objections to the Specification

The disclosure stands objected to because the status of the various copending applications had not been updated. Also, Applicants' Amendment filed April 5, 2004 stated that a substitute specification along with a marked up copy of the specification were attached, but the attachments were not received. A substitute specification in clean form and including paragraph numbers [0001] through [0059] is attached hereto as Appendix A, and a marked-up substitute specification to clearly identify amendments is attached hereto as Appendix B. The substitute specification updates the status of the copending applications, as required by the Examiner.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejections

Anticipation Rejection Based on Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,927,512)

Claims 1, 2, 7 through 11, 40, 41, 46, 47, and 50 through 53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,927,512).

Anticipation Rejection Based on Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,915,231)

Claims 1, 2, 6 through 11, 17 through 27, 40, 41, 45 through 47, 50 through 53, 59 through 63, 66 through 68, 73, 74, 80 through 83, 86 through 88, 93, 100 through 103, 106, and 107 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,915,231).

Anticipation Rejection Based on Shils et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,673)

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 17 through 19, 25, 26, 40, 41, 45, 47, 49, 50, 59 through 61, 65, 80, 81, 85, 100, 101, and 105 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shils et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,673).

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Obviousness Rejections

Obviousness Rejection Based on Shils et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,673)

Claims 3, 11 and 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shils et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,673). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, as hereinafter set forth.

Obviousness Rejection Based on Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,915,231) in View of Vu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,256,562)

Claims 68 through 72 and 88 through 92 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beffa (U.S. Patent No. 5,915,231) in view of Vu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,256,562).

Claim Objections

Claims 18 through 24 are objected to due to informalities in the claim language. Appropriate correction has been made.

35 U.S.C. § 112 Claim Rejections

Claims 28 through 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended the claimed invention as suggested by the Examiner for the presently claimed invention to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention to comply with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Therefore, presently amended claims 28 through 30 are allowable under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Allowed claims

Claims 31 through 39 are allowed.

Objections to Claims 4, 5, 12 through 16, 27, 42 through 44, 48, 54 through 58, 64, 75 through 79, 84, 94 through 99, 104, and 108/Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4, 5, 12 through 16, 27, 42 through 44, 48, 54 through 58, 64, 75 through 79, 84, 94 through 99, 104, and 108 stand objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but are indicated to contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if placed in appropriate independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 4. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 1 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 4. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 18 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 25 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 27. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 25 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 28 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 4. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 28 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 40 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 42. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 40 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 60 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 64. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 60 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 80 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 42. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 80 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Independent claim 100 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected to claim 42. Therefore, presently amended independent claim 100 is allowable as well as the dependent claims therefrom.

Applicants request entry of this amendment for the following reasons:

The amendment places the application in condition for allowance.

The amendment does not require any further search or consideration by the Examiner.

Applicants submit that claims 1 through 3, 6 through 26, 28 through 41, 43, and 45 through 108 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art.

Applicants request the entry of this amendment, the allowance of claims 1 through 3, 6 through 26, 28 through 41, 43, and 45 through 108, and the case passed for issue.

Respectfully submitted,



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